Met Office

Winter 2013/14

The following represents an assessment of the weather experienced across the UK during Winter 2013/2014 and how it compares with the 1981 to 2010 average.

Winter 2014 was an exceptionally stormy season, with at least 12 major winter storms affecting the UK in two spells from mid-December to early January, and again from late January to mid-February. When considered overall, this was the stormiest period of weather experienced by the UK for at least 20 years. An analysis of pressure fields by the University of East Anglia suggests this winter has had more very severe gale days than any other winter season in a series from 1871.

The persistent heavy rainfall through the season resulted in this being the wettest winter for the UK, England, Wales and Scotland, and the equal-wettest winter for Northern Ireland in series from 1910. It was also the wettest winter in the long running England and Wales Precipitation series from 1766. There were more days of rain during the winter than any other in a series from 1961. There was major flooding with the Somerset Levels remaining underwater for much of the season, and flooding also affected large sections of the River Thames. High winds combined with high tides and tidal surges to cause dangerous conditions and considerable damage to many coastal areas, particularly in the south west of England, and Wales. The westerly and unsettled weather meant that conditions were mild, with snowfalls largely confined to the Scottish mountains, and fewer air frosts for the UK than for any other winter in a series from 1961.

Mean temperatures over the UK were well above the long-term average for all three months with a mean winter temperature of 5.2 °C which is 1.5 °C above the average and the equal-fifth highest in the series. There was a notable absence of frosts, and the lowest UK temperature of the winter, -7.7 °C at Altnaharra, Sutherland on 17th February was the highest such winter value for at least 50 years.

Rainfall totals in December exceeded twice the monthly average across much of south-east England and Scotland, where it was the wettest calendar month in a series from 1910. The UK overall recorded 156% of December average rainfall. In January, much of southern England recorded two to three times the average rainfall and in south-east England it was the equal-wettest calendar month in the series from 1910. The UK overall recorded 155% of January average rainfall. The wet theme continued through February which was the 3rd wettest in the series. For winter overall the UK received 165% of average rainfall. Some parts of the country had in excess of twice average winter rainfall and the region of south east and central south of England had 235% of average.

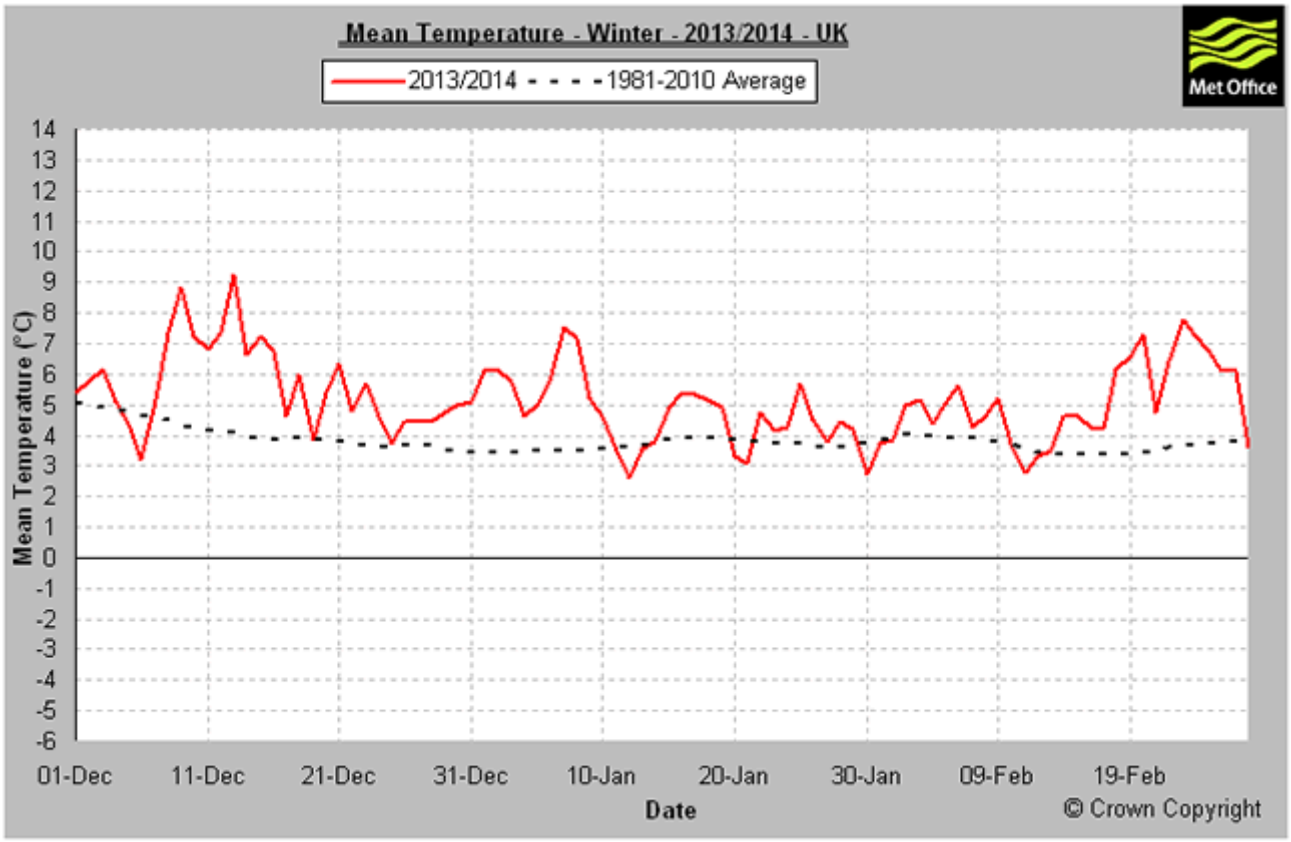
Despite the wet weather, much of central, eastern and southern England was sunnier than average throughout the winter. However, western areas of Wales and Scotland were notably dull. For the UK overall there was 101% of average sunshine hours.

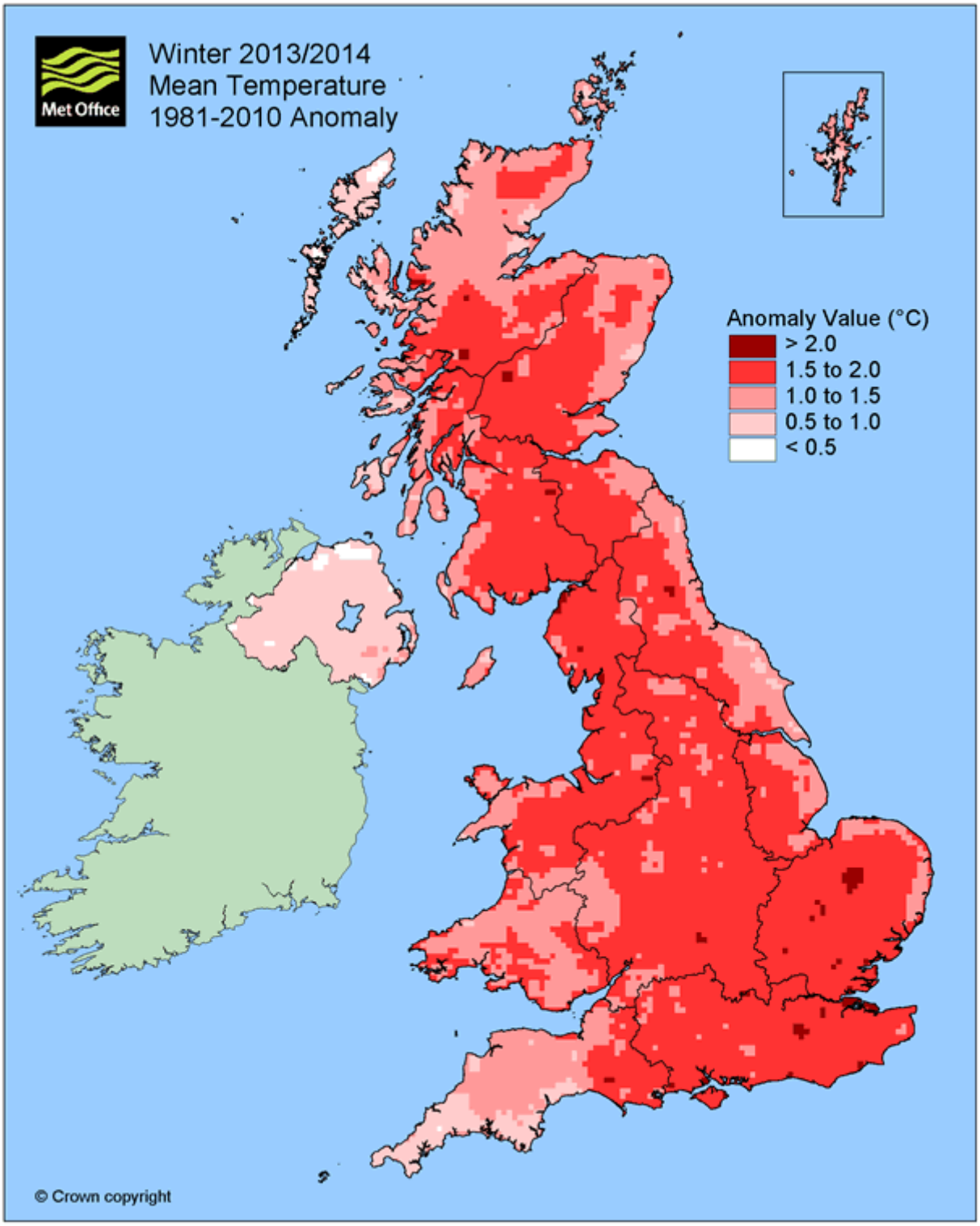
The animation below compares the weather of winter of 2009/2010 (left) and 2013/2014 (right) from the Met Office Unified Model. The panels show 250 hPa wind (corresponding to an altitude of approximately 10km coincident with the Jet Stream), and 850 hPa actual temperature. The animations run from 1 December to 28 February with a 3 hour time-step. There is a clear contrast between the characteristics of these two winters: weather patterns being cold and blocked in 2009/2010, and mild, westerly and stormy in 2013/2014. Courtesy David Fereday, Met Office Hadley Centre.

UK statistical summary

UK statistical summary

Mean temperature	Rainfall	Sunshine
The mean value is 5.2 °C, which is 1.5 °C above the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 545 mm, which is 165% of the 1981-2010 average.	The total is 160 hours, which is 101% of the 1981-2010 average.




Met Office
Winter 2013/2014
Mean Temperature
1981-2010 Anomaly
Anomaly Value (°C)
> 2.0
1.5 to 2.0
1.0 to 1.5
0.5 to 1.0
< 0.5
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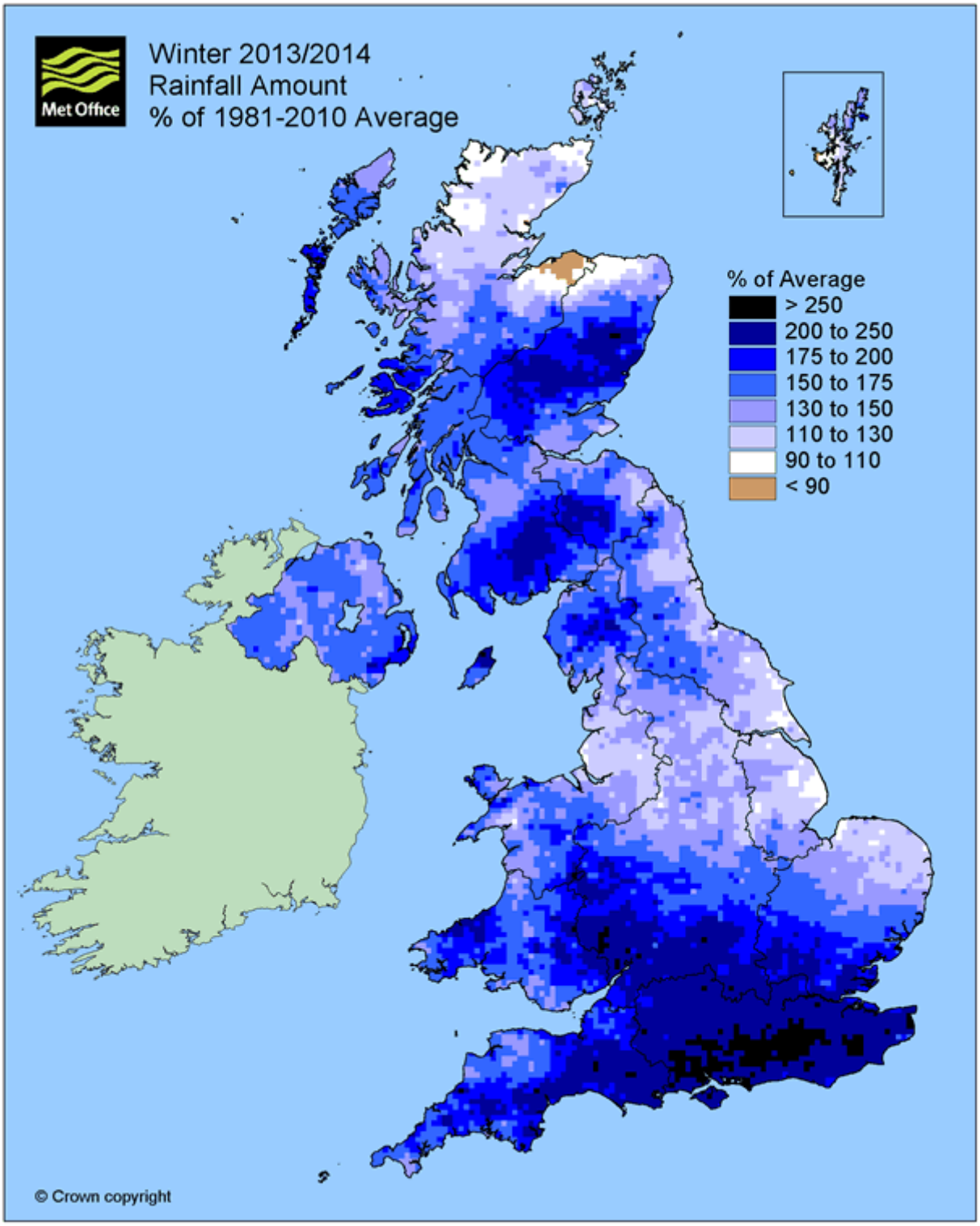

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